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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : AD/RR

DATE: 7 May 1952

FROM : Chief, D/G

SUBJECT: Suggestion for Photo-Intelligence Facility

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1. During the past year there has been a growing recognition by various components of CIA in the value of photo-interpretation and analysis for providing factual information not obtainable from other sources. This situation has been high-lighted by [REDACTED] report, the analysts in D/G have found it necessary to rely more and more on aerial photography to obtain detailed information required for their studies in support of operational requirements; and the operational divisions have been unable recently to obtain complete information desired from photo analysis undertaken, upon request, by the Photo-Interpretation Section, Reconnaissance Branch, AFOTN. It is therefore suggested that consideration be given to the advisability of establishing a competently staffed Photo-Intelligence Branch within the Agency. A centralized facility of this type might be established, organizationally, within the Geographic Division.

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2. The Naval Photo-Interpretation Center and the PIS, Reconnaissance Branch, AFOTN, are heavily loaded with their own priority work and find difficulty in meeting special requests from CIA for photo-interpretation and analysis. One recent [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] PIS was unable to do this work and the requirement was, therefore, brought to the attention of D/G. The project was transferred by D/G to AMS and, although small in size, involved the expenditure of [REDACTED] A more [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The only photography consists of Top Secret obliques. The required analysis can be accomplished only by a highly trained photogrammetrist not available in either of the photo-interpretation organizations. D/G itself must utilize aerial photography for many of its detailed studies in support of operations and should have expert photo-interpretation facilities available to it. Other divisions of ORR have benefited already from photo-analysis and it is obvious that a great deal more of this type of work will be wanted. Some CIA projects are very sensitive in character and others require the

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utilization of Top Secret photography which is not easily obtained by facilities outside the IAC. It is believed that a continuing work-load for photo-analysis would result from requirements placed by ORR, OSI, OSO and OPC.

3. G/R/OCD has clear channels for obtaining any photography held by Central Photo Records, AG/AF, and by other photo libraries in the Government and is understood to have primarily a collection and registry function. Photo-interpretation is a highly technical skill and there should be a facility available in CIA to all components who require this type of work. This facility should be staffed by a highly competent general photo-interpretation expert who can evaluate interpretation problems from a variety of viewpoints; a competent photogrammetrist who is expert in adjusting uncontrolled verticals and obliques to obtain approximate horizontal accuracy and spot elevations; several trained photo-transportation, industrial plants, geology and mining, and terrain, interpreters each fully competent in specific fields such as

[REDACTED] suggestion

of a high-caliber photo-interpreter, such as [REDACTED] appears excellent and such a man could be in charge of a facility of this character and could work closely with various components of CIA in determining their current and potential requirements. The specialized photo-interpreters should be in frequent contact with their counter-part specialists in the various Divisions in order that these interpreters can be abreast of the detailed types of analysis required. Analysts in the Divisions would be able to assist these experts in the development of more and more accurate keys for analyzing photos of Soviet installations.

4. D/G is suggested as a suitable place for a Photo-Intelligence Branch because it already maintains certain centralized intelligence production facilities; members of D/G represent CIA on the Committee and Panel of the Research and Development Board concerned with the development of photo-interpretation keys; a member of D/G participates in the meetings of the Inter-Agency Graphic Research Coordination Group which is concerned with availability of aerial and ground photography; D/G coordinates requirements for indices of commercial aerial photography on foreign areas and distributes such information received through OO channels; D/G analysts keep abreast of the extent and quality of air-photo coverage for mapping purposes in all foreign areas;

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finished photo-analysis often results in maps and map overlays; and geographers, as well as specialists in other fields, have long utilized photo-interpretation as a research tool and are currently participating in the development of air-photo keys.

5. A representative of the Reconnaissance Branch, AFOIN, has informally advised D/G that his organization does not have the capability for developing detailed photo keys for current Soviet installations and terrain characteristics. He felt that CIA with its knowledge of the Soviet area could be of great assistance in furnishing the intelligence needed for such development and intimated that it would be most advantageous if the CIA could accept a pending [REDACTED] contract for the development of such specialized photo-interpretation keys. From the intelligence point of view, the development of these keys could be very beneficial in meeting potential CIA photo-interpretation requirements. If a photo intelligence facility were established, it is possible that acceptance of such a contract could be considered in order to provide a backlog work-load pending full development of day-to-day CIA requirements.

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